

III. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

- PLEASE FIND BELOW A MARKED VERSION OF CLAIMS WITH PRESENT STATUS DELINEATED
 - THE CLAIMS ARE HEREIN AMENDED, CANCELED, OR ADDED TO, SO AS TO EVENTUATE IN THE NEW SET OF PENDING CLAIMS INDICATED BELOW. THIS LISTING OF CLAIMS WILL REPLACE ALL PRIOR VERSIONS AND LISTING OF CLAIMS IN THE APPLICATION.

-- The status of each claim is indicated after the claim number by use of a parenthetical identifier selected from: (Original), (Currently amended), (Canceled), (Withdrawn), (Withdrawn – currently amended), (Previously presented), (New), and (Not entered). Claim text is provided for each claim in the listing except for the claims status “canceled” or “not entered.” Only claims having the status of “Currently amended” or “Withdrawn – currently amended” include markings to indicate changes that have been made relative to the immediate prior version of the claims. The text of any deleted matter is shown by strike-through, except that double brackets placed before and after deleted characters of five or fewer consecutive characters may be used. The text of any added subject matter is shown by underlining the added text. Claims that were previously canceled that are reinstated here, if any, are reinstated by adding the claim as a “(New)” claim with a new claim number.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Currently Amended) A fractionator for collecting at least a portion of a sample disposed in a sample tube, the fractionator comprising:
 - a head having a head surface at a forward end of the head and a shaft on the back end, the head being configured to form a slideable seat with the inside surface of a sample tube;
 - a collection port disposed forward of the head surface; and
 - a fluid passageway in fluid communication with the collection port, the fluid passageway being configured and arranged to allow fluid transport from the sample tube to a sample receptacle.
2. (Original) The fractionator of claim 1, wherein:
 - the head surface of the head is positioned inside the sample tube; and
 - a plenum space is defined forward of the head and is bounded, at least in part, by the head surface, the collection port, and the inner surface of the sample tube.
3. (Original) The fractionator of claim 1, wherein:
 - the head is configured for use with a sample tube having a predetermined sample tube cross-section;
 - the collection port has a predetermined collection port cross-section; and
 - the ratio of the collection port cross-section to the sample tube cross-section is in the range of from 1 :10 to 1 :1000.
4. (Original) The fractionator of claim 3, wherein the ratio of the collection port cross-section to the sample tube cross-section is in the range of from 1 :25 to 1:100.
5. (Original) The fractionator of claim 1, wherein the collection port is placed off center from the center of the head.
6. (Original) The fractionator of claim 1, wherein the collection port is placed at the center of the head.

7. (Original) The fractionator of claim 1, wherein the collection port is configured and arranged to isolate the head surface from a sample during collection of the sample from the sample tube.

8. – 16. (Withdrawn)